



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Notes for the Task and Finish group to discuss options for the Minehead Town Council Offices which were held on Tuesday 16th January 2024 at 7.00 pm at the Town Council Offices, 3 Summerland Road, Minehead, TA24 5BP

Present: Councillors C Palmer, B Hodson, B Hall

In attendance: B Parker (Town Clerk)

Councillors were shown a copy of the letter that had been sent by the landlord in response to MTC's request for a one-year extension to the current lease. In the letter, the landlord responded:

- That the landlord will proceed with marketing the whole building for sale
- There would be no flexibility with the price as agents would be involved
- MTC would possibly not be able to continue/proceed with buying if the sale is successful.

The Clerk provided councillors with the original office options paper and the notes from the last task and finish group meeting in advance.

Councillors considered the options paper and discussed the benefits, disadvantages and risks associated with the options. It was felt that, at this stage, the risks associated with *option 2; Buying the offices* were much less than the other options. Councillors agreed that an office set up that allowed all the office staff to be based in one building and having a town centre location was essential.

The prospect of purchasing the current offices without the properties above the MTC offices, raised the topic of the advantages and disadvantages of owning the freehold against that of owning the leasehold and in order to fully understand it, independent legal advice would be appropriate. It was also agreed that as the offices have evidence of damp, an in-depth structural survey would be necessary to better understand how viable a purchase would be. The survey and legal advice would then allow MTC to accurately identify the costs and responsibilities to carry out any required repairs. The Clerk advised councillors that although staff are currently working from the offices, the internal layout would need to transform considerably in order for it to reflect the needs of both councillors and staff. The clerk also highlighted the lack of natural ventilation, light and the privacy impacts of the large windows that made up most of the external wall. He reported that in the summer, the offices got very warm and stuffy and in the winter they were very cold. The financial cost of rectifying and the practicality of carrying out any works would need to be further investigated to make the offices suitable. The benefits of employing an interior designer would also be considered.

Recommendation: To respond to the landlord's letter and to state that on further consideration, MTC may be interested in buying the current office leasehold subject to a satisfactory survey and to ask if they would consider this possibility.

Meeting ended at 20:15.

Ben Parker, Town Clerk

16/01/24